

**In the Claims**

Claims 1-8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) A gas-fired hot water heater which is fire-safed against flash-back ignition of fugitive flammable vapors accidentally occurring in the surrounding atmosphere, said heater comprising:

- (a) a cabinet,
- (b) a tank located in said cabinet,
- (c) a combustion chamber in said cabinet,
- (d) a burner mounted in said combustion chamber for heating water in said tank,
- (e) a gas-supply line leading into said burner,
- (f) openings in said cabinet for allowing air to enter said combustion chamber to mix with [[said]] natural gas and produce a flame in said burner,
- (g) and nested ellipsoids covering said openings in said cabinet for preventing said flame in said burner from flashing out of said cabinet and igniting fugitive flammable vapors surrounding

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said cabinet, said ellipsoids being formed from expanded metal sheets made from magnesium alloy foil containing at least 3% magnesium and having a thickness in the range from 0.05-1.0 mm.

10. (original) A hot water heater as in claim 9 wherein there is a burner access opening in said cabinet and a contained layer of said ellipsoids in said access opening.

Claims 11-13. (canceled)

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14. (previously presented) In a process for heating hot water in a tank, wherein a supply of gas is continuously introduced into a combustion chamber adjacent said tank, and a supply of air from the atmosphere surrounding said chamber is continuously introduced into said chamber through openings in said chamber to produce a flammable mixture which is burned with a flame to heat the said water in said tank, the step of placing a contained layer of nested ellipsoids in said openings in said chamber for preventing said flame in said chamber from flashing out of said chamber and igniting fugitive flammable vapors in the said atmosphere surrounding said chamber, said ellipsoids being formed from expanded metal sheets made from magnesium alloy foil containing at least 3% magnesium and having a thickness in the range from 0.05-1.0 mm.